

# Spastics News

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31st AGM: after the good news, it's time for self-analysis

## In surplus, but out of favour

"The Spastics Society has returned to a revenue surplus of £258,000 after a run of deficits", announced Bill Huddleston, Honorary Treasurer, at the Annual General Meeting on October 15.

"It is especially gratifying that this figure is so close to the budgeted surplus. This indicates to me that the finances of The Society are under control".

To 360 members and staff gathered at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London, it was indeed good news; the first time for seven years that The Society has escaped a deficit.

In 1982-3, The Society's income was £24.5 million. Two groups increased their contributions by 50 per cent: the Stars Organisation for Spastics and those who left legacies amounting to £1.9 million.

On the expenditure side, the cost of fundraising was held to 11 per cent of total income, and the cost of administration and finance to 3 per cent of a total expenditure of £22.9 million. £0.5 million had been lost to VAT.

In thanking all those who had contributed to the income, or its management, Mr. Huddleston paid particular tribute to the Finance Division, and to three retiring members of the Finance Committee, Bill Burn, Jack Emms and Gerald Wiener.

Mrs. Joyce Smith, in her Chairman's Report, also emphasised the healthy bank balance. "This achievement is due to the unfailing generosity of the public; the hard work of volunteers and staff; a more effective and professional management and

an increasing public profile".

The theme of her speech, like the Annual Report, was Integration. She talked of the meetings organised around the country at which resolutions were passed favouring anti-discrimination legislation. She also mentioned other Society initiatives, such as the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education, and regional consumer groups.

"However, a number of disabled people are critical of The Society", she said. "To them, we are not moving quickly enough

and they question our commitment to internal integration.

"If we are to convince our critics, and all those we represent of our value, maybe we should examine our concepts. Are we recognising each other's needs? Do we know what those needs are? It will be only by consultation and co-operation that these questions will be answered. We believe in being accountable, so discussion and constructive criticism should be seen as a healthy practice".

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Jack Blake

Sitting in the front row at the AGM between Lady Glenconner (formerly the Lady Anne Tennant), President of SOS, and Sathi Alur of the Spastics Society of India, Sir John Cox remained unrecognised until Mrs. Smith announced his appointment.

## The new director

The Society has a new Director. He is Vice Admiral Sir John Cox KCB, 55, ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm.

Sir John, who starts work on 3

January, has no illusions about what he is taking on. "It's a big job and a very important appointment", he says.

Already he has visited some of The Society's centres and begun to learn from people at grass-roots level.

At the AGM he talked again to disabled people from Neath Hill. He was surprised there weren't more disabled people present.

The liveliness and commitment of members and staff was what impressed him most. And their response to him? "Heart-warming".

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## BATs make trouble

Mrs. Blodwen Ellis (Retford and Workop Group) raised once again the subject of The Society's investments in tobacco.

"These are a very small amount, and give us a good return in financial terms," replied Bill Huddleston.

(He was referring to 15,000 BAT Industries valued at £97,500 in April 1983 and representing 0.7 per cent of total investment.)

"The Executive Council agreed with our policy, that we should be doing what is in the best interests of the finances of The Society," he went on, "and we did not change that policy."

This was not enough for Mrs. Ellis. "I don't travel an awful long way just to sit quietly and accept everything that's happening," she said. "I don't think that our only thought should be

to the financial returns on our investment."

Although her request for an emergency resolution was turned down because no notice had been given, Mrs. Ellis was allowed to make a statement.

She felt guilty at asking people for money, she said, knowing that some of it would be put into the manufacture of tobacco.

"Whether people smoke or not is entirely up to them, but I am sure the majority in this room cannot accept that The Society is making profit out of one of the main causes of handicapped birth."

The mood of the meeting seemed to be with her.

Mrs. Smith promised that the subject would be discussed at the next Executive Council meeting in November.

## Campaign will fight LEA discrimination

Seven organisations representing teaching unions, the voluntary sector and consumer groups have joined forces in a national campaign for the right of young people with special needs to have full-time further education. 22 other organisations are supporting them.

At the launch of the campaign on 31 October, representatives from The Spastics Society, MENCAP, RADAR, GLAD (Greater London Association for Disabled People), the NUT, NATHE (National Association of Teachers in Higher Education) and the National Bureau for Handicapped Students expressed concern that the 1944 Education Act was being flouted. Recent surveys show that many local education authorities are not fulfilling their legal duty to provide education at school or college for those 16-19 year-olds who want it. In 1981, 50,000 16 year-olds needed further education but only 5,000 places were available.

"We hope the campaign will generate publicity so as to reach parents and students", said Tim Yeo in his introductory speech. "We want to make them aware of their entitlement."

Although successive governments have accepted the principle enshrined in the Education Act, they have made no effort to ensure that it is carried out. The first step in the campaign will be to ask Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, to issue a circular to LEAs reminding them of their statutory duty and advising them how to fulfil it.

The group will also ask the government for more money to implement the law and will press LEAs to encourage young people to stay on in further education by providing information about courses and facilities.

Local authorities will not be able to plead lack of funds: they are legally bound to find the money.

Experience has shown that when parents confront LEAs, the parents usually win. However, it may need a test case in the courts to stir the DES into action. MENCAP knows of 16 suitable cases round the country and has already taken legal advice.

Tim Yeo believes that further education could be provided at little extra cost because in the long run fewer young people would be dependent on the State and that would save money. A recent study at Brixton College of Further Education found that handicapped students were more successful at finding jobs than those who had not been to college.

The Society is backing the campaign with efforts of its own. It has already taken up several cases, successfully, and in the last two years it has increased the number of places at its further education colleges — by 33 per cent at Dene College, and by 50 per cent at Beaumont College.

The campaign booklet, *After 16: the Education of Young People with Special Needs*, is available, free, from Helen Gray, Library Department, The Society, tel: 01-636 5020.



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# Letters to the Editor

Spastics News 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

## A parent's view of euthanasia

My son, Alun, has just been informed that he will be admitted to St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, to read English; this on the basis of an "impeccable academic record" which includes nine 'O' levels, one 'OA' level and three 'A' levels, all at Grade A, and two distinctions in special papers.

Alun was handicapped at birth and I think it should give pause to any advocate of euthanasia to realise that his parents were told he would be a vegetable confined to hospital or institution for life.

In our shock and despair we wondered and we questioned why the pediatrician, his colleagues and a devoted nursing team fought for days to save what appeared to be a useless life. We had reconciled ourselves to our loss and if anyone had put a consent form in front of us at that time, who knows what we might have done, or agreed to be done?

Now, eighteen years and ten months later, we have a fine son, capable of contributing to life and society, who has pioneered his way through primary and comprehensive schools and whose example has made it easier for other handicapped children to follow in his path.

He is a remarkable son and brother and a constant source of pride and joy to us all. He will also be extremely embarrassed if this letter is published but I thought his story should be told.

J. David OBE,  
1 Coneydale,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Herts.

## Wheelchair parent replies

After reading Bill Hargreaves' letter in the October issue of *Spastics News*, I was spurred to write to point out that able-bodied parents also have problems with their children. I know some children who will never bring friends to their home because it is untidy.

We are lucky that our two sons stay by us when we go out as a family. We know we might have problems in the future, but please don't paint too black a picture of spastic parents having children.

Everyone will have some problems in life. A disability brings extra problems, but everybody can live a full life. It is your life, so enjoy it!  
**Bob Jamieson,**  
42 Church Park Road,  
Pitsea,  
Essex.

## Teignmouth says thank you

I write on behalf of the Teignmouth and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce to sincerely thank you for the beautifully written article, "Teignmouth Finds a Friend" (July 1983) which is the first time the real truth has been printed.

I would also like our grateful thanks to be conveyed to Helen Donaghue for her part in orga-

nising and making possible Bill Hargreaves' visit to Teignmouth. Last but by no means least to Bill Hargreaves and his wife Mary — they certainly did have a five-day marathon visit, which started early each day and finished most nights about midnight. The work done by Bill has reflected very favourably throughout the summer months.

**R. H. Bennett,**  
President, Teignmouth Chamber of Commerce

## The consumer will decide

I read with great interest Tim Yeo's recent commentary on the future direction of The Society's residential provision (*Spastics News*, August). I can only stress that I support his view of the need for much greater participation by residents in the day to day running of our residential units.

The recent report to the Executive Council on the re-organisation of The Spastics Society residential and day care provision should begin the process of greater consumer participation. In fact, the new Area Managers will be given the responsibility of ensuring that this happens.

**John Belcher,**  
Director of Social Services,  
Family Services and Assessment Centre,  
16 Fitzroy Square,  
London W1P 5HQ.

## If we don't, someone else will!

The "Adopt-a-Centre" scheme is a local orientated project, and it is only with the support of interested local people that we can hope to build it up.

Even if you and your colleagues or friends are already involved in fund-raising for The Society or its local groups, the chances are that you will not be doing it by means of payroll deduction. This method provides vital and regular income for local activities, and puts large sections of the community in closer touch with handicapped people.

Please talk about this scheme with your colleagues and ask them to give us the opportunity to explain it in more detail.

Remember, this form of fund-raising is being pursued by virtually every other major charity in the country. If we do not do it for cerebral-palsied people, it will be done for someone else.

**Alan Conroy,**  
Industrial Liaison Officer,  
The Spastics Society,  
12 Park Crescent, W1N 4EQ.  
Tel: 01-636 5020 ext. 269

## Donation

It was agreed at our last meeting that we would like to make a donation of £50 to *Spastics News* to ensure continuation of this interesting newspaper which we all like to receive. Congratulations to all those concerned.

**G. R. Sones,**  
Hon. Treasurer,  
Canterbury and Kent Coast Spastics Group

(Thank you very much — Editor.)

The process of critical self scrutiny is one of the most important for any organisation. It is also one of the most difficult to carry out regularly because there is a natural tendency on the part of those running the organisation to give a cool reception to criticism.

For this reason, The Society's new film *A Shift of Emphasis*, which was shown for the first time at the Annual General Meeting, is particularly welcome. The producer of the film, Nigel Evans, was asked to examine how The Society has evolved in recent years, and to pay particular attention to the way in which we have attempted to adapt to the wishes of consumers.

The film does not duck the conflicts which go to the very heart of The Society's activities. The most obvious of these conflicts reflects the tensions which every family is familiar with, as children grow into adults and the relationship between parent and child undergoes a complete transformation.

As a body founded by parents just over 30 years ago, The Society has in that sense reached adulthood, and many of the children who were initially the recipients of The Society's services now have every expectation and right to be master of those services.

At the same time, the parents, whose courage, determination, energy and hard work established the organisation, have a natural and deeply felt reluctance to relinquish their own controlling role.

This conflict is not just felt with The Society at national level; it is sometimes even more acute in local groups. Our job must be to see that it is a conflict which produces constructive results. In local terms,



THE DIRECTOR

## The value of conflict

this may be through the formation of new groups, comprising consumers or younger parents, to work in the same geographical areas as existing older groups. Alternatively, it may be by the greater integration of younger consumers within existing frameworks.

Against the background of this fundamental conflict there are more subtle tensions, which the film also touches on. Some of these relate to how certain services are provided. For example, the portrayal of the Sully Work Centre illustrates a very significant change in attitudes towards handicapped workers during the last few years.

The film also presents very clearly the contradictions which are present in The Society's attempt to give a more independent life style to resi-

dents at the Fokus scheme at Milton Keynes. It is clear that we have not yet resolved the difficulties posed by a wish to minimise the caring and supportive role without imposing unnecessary constraint on the lives of the individuals at Milton Keynes.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for a film of this length to deal in depth with more than one, or perhaps two, themes.

Nevertheless, the film does just manage to hint at another of The Society's unresolved philosophical problems — what kind of life style should we be trying to provide for the severely multiply handicapped child and adult? Is it realistic for us to do anything other than provide a loving and caring environment?

I do not believe that this issue has yet been considered in the amount of detail which is needed to provide an informed answer, and I would like to see The Society tackle this key question during the next few years.

Finally, there remains another area of conflict — ever present in voluntary organisations. It is between the volunteers, on whom the existence of The Society ultimately depends and who have legal control and responsibility for the whole set-up, and the very large body of professional staff, whose views about how The Society should be run and about the kind of attitudes and services which it should be promoting, may be very different.

There is no escape from this conflict, and again one hopes that it is a creative tension from which positive results are derived.

Tim Yeo

## Big print, please

I am a pupil at Claremont School for the physically handicapped in Bristol. We get your monthly newspaper at school but because the print is so small I have to get one of my teachers to read it out to me. I am trying to suggest to you that it would be a lot more helpful to disabled people like myself to have *Spastics News* printed in big print. After all, it is for people with sight problems.

**Emily Hyde (Aged 15)**  
6 Berkshire Road,  
Bishopston,  
Bristol, BS7 8EX.

(I'm afraid it would be difficult to change the newspaper just now. Have you tried using a magnifier? Your teacher may be able to help — Editor.)

## Top Shop

On occasion when visiting Hastings I pop into the Spastics Shop. I wish to express my appreciation of the goodwill and care manageress and staff show to prospective customers.

Recently we enjoyed an hilarious few minutes with two "grans" escorted by two youths. I imagine the young men were caring for elderly holidaymakers as we were informed they had 95 other "grans" to care for. The youths, with aid of staff, were measuring appropriate dresses.

You see, your staff are not only giving and raising funds for The Spastics Society; they give service and pleasure to customers.

**Phyllis Waterman,**  
115 Marina,  
St. Leonards-on-Sea,  
East Sussex, TN38 0BN.

## Chairman's Report

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Meanwhile, The Society continues to provide its traditional services, mindful that voluntary organisations must complement those provided by local authorities.

"But", warned Mrs. Smith, "if such partnerships are to flourish — and the Government has expressed its desire for full partnership — we must have more than expressions of co-operation. They should be backed by real concessions such as relief from VAT."

She deplored the lack of statutory services. *Care in the Community*, she said, could only become a reality if the Government allocated adequate resources.

"The Government has a responsibility", she declared, "and it is up to us to urge the Government to implement the measures necessary to discharge such responsibilities".

Mrs. Smith felt that The Society was fortunate in having such a caring patron, Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Kent. She thanked the Duke of Westminster, The Society's President, who was chairman of the meeting, for his interest and his work. She expressed the thanks and good wishes of The Society to Margaret Morgan and Ernest Williment, who have retired, to Derek Lancaster-Gaye, who now directs Cerebral Palsy Overseas, and to Tim Yeo. "All of us know how much his enthusiasm and imagination have motivated the Society through some difficult times", she said.

She re-affirmed the need to question attitudes about disability and discrimination.

"We in The Spastics Society are in the ideal position to lead the way. We should not let that opportunity fall through our fingers. We are big enough and we are strong enough. But even more important, we have the expertise and the experience".

*Mrs. Smith's Report is available from Ingrid Brewer, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.*

*Further reports and pictures on pages 6 and 7.*

## Voting Results

This year there was a record 12 people competing for five places on the Executive Council.

The following were elected (number of votes in brackets):  
**Dr. Ronald Firman (67)**

**Eileen Milnes (59)**

**Bill Hargreaves (59)**

**Dorothy Cottle (57)**

**Sharon Hughes (52)**

### Honorary Officers

All the honorary officers were re-elected.

**Chairman:** Mrs. Joyce Smith

**Vice-Chairmen:** Derek Ashcroft

**Iorwerth Thomas**

**Hon. Treasurer:** Bill Huddleston

### Special Resolution

A resolution which would have required a casual vacancy on the Executive Council to be offered to the person who had the most votes of the candidates not elected at the previous AGM, was lost. Although 71.3 per cent of members voted in favour of the resolution, Company Law requires a majority of 75 per cent.



## REPORTS

### Social Services Conference

## A flop

The conference of the Association of County Councils/Association of Metropolitan Authorities held in Oxford on 28-29 September looked exciting. The Society was represented for the first time by Mrs. Joyce Smith and myself.

Unfortunately, expectation did not live up to reality mainly due to poor organisation.

The guest speakers grappled admirably with Victorian values and the provision of social services; the ageing population, and comparisons between the English and Scottish systems of child care legislation. However, many of the themes and views in their reports were lost on the audience due to poor planning and the acoustics of the main auditorium.

The highlight of the conference was to have been an address by Kenneth Clarke, MP, Minister of Health. It was a highlight, but in another sense. Labour councillors staged a protest at the government's policy on the Health Service and walked out of the meeting.

Mr. Clarke valiantly attempted to redeem the situation by stressing the themes of co-operation between local authorities, the Health Service and the voluntary sector, but his speech was rather rambling and once again the points were lost.

One can only hope that next year's conference will be better.

John Belcher

### Labour Party Conference

## A new look at Social Security

The National Health Service and Pensions and Social Security were both debated at the Labour Party Conference.

The Motion on the NHS concentrated mainly on "the cuts", as did the speakers. Jack Ashley MP wanted a commitment from the next Labour government to



The line-up of speakers at the Labour Party Conference fringe meeting. From left, Frank Dobson MP, Bob Wareing MP, Ron Gerver, Frances Morrell, Leader of the Inner London Education Authority, and Mark Vaughan.

restore services. Harry Ewing MP referred to what life was like before the NHS.

Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, opposition spokesman on health, speaking for the National Executive Council, reminded Conference of how the Conservative government had denied the existence of a "secret manifesto" during the Election. She mimicked the Prime Minister: "I will no more dismantle the health service than dismantle the country's defences." Her reply to that was, the army had better watch out!

The debate on social security called for a new look at Labour Party policy. The mover of the Motion called for an integrated benefit and taxation system. He reminded Conference that 6 million people live on means tested benefits and that more people depend on benefits than on any one wage settlement.

The seconder said the National Insurance contribution system was "devisive" because the benefits go to those in the labour market while women and people who have been disabled from birth often slip through the net.

After a speech by Moss Evans, of the TGWU, and a debate, the conference endorsed improvements in retirement pensions. It also agreed to ask the NEC to consider social security policy.

### Fringe meeting

"It is easier to agree a principle that it is to work out the practical implication of change" said Frances Morrell, Leader of the Inner London Education Authority, about the '81 Education Act.

She went on to say that while the ILEA accepts the principle of the Warnock Report, that handicapped children should be

integrated into ordinary schools, it would have to be a gradual movement given the lack of facilities in most schools.

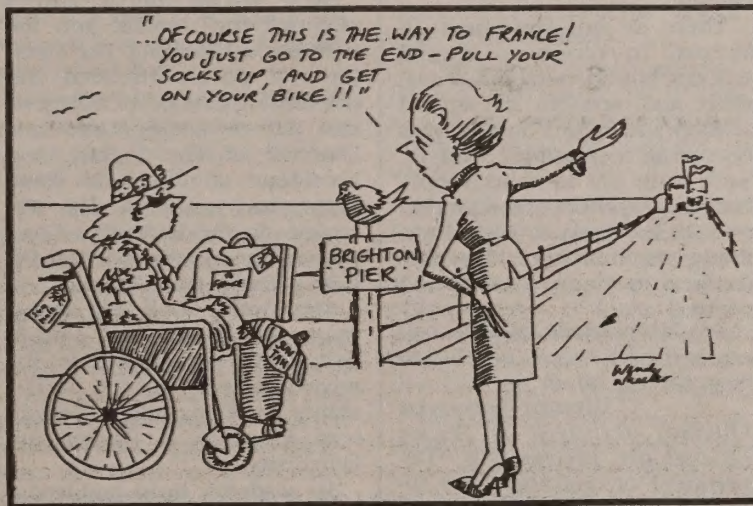
Frances Morrell was speaking at a fringe meeting organised by The Society last month at the Labour Party Conference. Other speakers were Frank Dobson MP, Bob Wareing MP and Mark Vaughan. Ron Gerver was in the chair.

Responding to Mark Vaughan, who put a strong case for integration, Ms. Morrell urged The Society and others to set up a dialogue with the Authority over priorities in the special education budget, due to be published shortly as a consultative document.

She talked of the progress made by the ILEA, particularly with the under-5s.

The Government came in for heavy criticism from Frank Dobson, opposition spokesman on education. It was not providing the money to promote integration, he said.

He urged those attending the meeting to take up the issue in their local areas and to put pressure on the Government to provide more money. He



been kicked and bitten and attacked with calipers. One resident in the bath had grabbed at a member of staff and nearly pulled her in.

On the second day, the causes of violence were studied including a framework for understanding the relationship between frustration and different kinds of violent behaviour. When discussing the causes of frustration, particular attention was paid to poor communication between residents and staff, poor management of homes, poor co-ordination of teamwork.

The session on "effects of violence" revealed that some members had retained long term effects of anger, guilt, frustration and fear, as well as worry about protecting other staff and residents.

After a session on relaxation skills — much needed, one would think — the discussion turned to "coping actions."

Dr. Dunham presented a framework for understanding a resident and using different behaviour modification techniques. He emphasised prevention. He also warned against

quoted Neil Kinnock MP, the new leader of the Labour Party, who had said at the Committee stage of the Education Bill, "The '81 Act is like Brighton Pier: it's fine as far as it goes but it's no way to get to France."

Brighton Pier, he reminded his audience, had since collapsed. The '81 Education Act must not be allowed to go the same way.

Discrimination against handicapped children and adults, which Ron Gerver had talked about in his introductory speech, was picked up by Bob Wareing when discussing his forthcoming Bill.

"Discrimination against the disabled is as pernicious in our society as it is against women and blacks", he said. Disabled people, like everyone else, should have access to the courts and tribunals to protect their rights.

Amanda Jordan

### Conservative Party Conference

## The Health Service is safe with us, isn't it?

The National Health Service was also a subject for debate at the Conservative Party Conference, and concern was expressed by some representatives about cut-backs affecting front line care.

One representative told of how her husband, who suffered from cancer, had had to pay prescription charges because his condition did not exempt him. The Secretary of State, Norman Fowler MP, promised a re-

examination of the policy.

The need to streamline management and make savings in administrative services were also raised. More than one speaker repeated the phrase, "The health service is safe with us", but they were obviously seeking some reassurance from the platform.

In replying to the debate, Norman Fowler made one of the most significant and successful speeches of the week. Whilst acknowledging the concern in the conference hall, he repeated the Government's wish to avoid cutting front line care. He looked forward to the Griffith's Report on NHS management which is expected shortly. He favoured a shift towards preventative medicine.

It was a speech with something for everyone and seemed to go a long way to restoring faith in the Government's ability to manage the health service efficiently without affecting patient care.

Greater emphasis on housing for elderly and disabled people was promised by Ian Gow, the Housing Minister. In the debate, he vigorously defended the rights of disabled and elderly people to buy their own houses, but acknowledged that local authorities should be encouraged to build more purpose-built accommodation for those who are unable to buy.

Feelings ran high about the defeat of the Government in the House of Lords last year over the right of housing association tenants to buy. Although this controversial clause has not been re-introduced into the Housing Bill, it is still under consideration.

### Fringe meeting

"The present system of social security benefits discriminates against those people disabled since birth who are unable to work up an adequate contribution record," argued Tim Yeo MP at a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party Conference organised by The Society last month.

He stressed the widespread support both within the Conservative party and in other parties for the idea of a comprehensive disability income.

The Society also wants to see an improved maternity benefits system as a means of reducing poverty in pregnancy, he added. He urged the Government to remember the link between handicap and poverty when completing its Spring review of maternity benefits.

Tony Newton, MP, Minister for the Disabled, welcomed the debate on the future of disability benefits which had been initiated by The Society.

"But", he asked, "is it realistic to go forward in one jump?" The Society's proposal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer last spring would have cost a minimum of £2,000 million. He urged The Society to concentrate on an incremental approach.

He explained how the Government had already improved social security benefits, but it was important to recognise that disabled people needed services as well as money.

In the discussion which followed, The Society received support to continue its efforts.

Lack of co-ordination between Government departments, particularly in *Care in the Community* initiatives, were strongly criticised, and the Minister promised to discuss this was his colleagues.

Amanda Jordan

## CASTLE PRIORY

"Violence does happen in residential and short-term care centres, and it should be recognised", wrote a member of the course.

"Staff support is absolutely essential and I was staggered at the amount of isolation experienced by others, and the attitudes of management — report it and forget it — within some establishments."

Dr. Dunham's course was designed to break down the sense of isolation felt by care staff who have experienced violence, and to set up ways of dealing with those feelings of fear and guilt which many have experienced. People shared their experiences and learned about themselves and caring. Along the way, it became evident that management attitudes are overdue for a change.

The eighteen members of the course represented a wide range of services for disabled people.

They had already told Dr.

## Violence against Care Staff

A course given at Castle Priory College, 12-14 October, by Dr. Jack Dunham, Consultant in Psychology, University of Bath.

Dunham what they hoped to learn: "I want to recognise and predict when anger and frustration will turn into physical violence"; "following an act of violence, and assuming calm has been restored, how should one cope with the anger, frustration and feelings of repressed hostility felt by the staff member?"

These aims were discussed at the first afternoon session.

In the evening, small groups explored the physical and verbal violence they had experienced. For example, darts had been thrown, as well as chairs, food and crockery. Boys had threatened female staff. Staff had





The kind of view that a visitor does not forget.

## Sweden: the problems of success

Sweden, together with other Scandinavian countries, is admired for her policies on Integration, her equality and freedom. Maybe this strong sense of justice has arisen from her recent history.

Sweden has enjoyed peace for a long time, and did not take part in any of the World Wars. Rich in natural resources — water, timber and minerals — she entered the post war period as a wealthy country, compared to her European neighbours. The trade union movement has been strong since the turn of the century, and Sweden has had a Labour government for over 40 years.

Sweden is a country of great space and modern buildings. Most housing, shops, schools and hospitals have been built since 1950.

Swedish people are proud of their homes, and spend a lot of time and effort improving them. But they also like the outdoor life, and the municipalities provide many facilities.

The importance of the family is reflected in policies on employment and social services. Children are very precious, and much of Swedish life is geared to the needs of the family.

Voluntary organisations and associations play an important role in Swedish democracy and receive considerable grants from the State, the County Councils and municipalities. Organisations representing handicapped people are powerful and have great influence on the forming of policies.

Integration is much less of a political issue in Sweden than in the U.K. It is supported by all political parties.

As a rule, handicapped children go to normal schools. 90 per cent of physically handicapped children are individually integrated.

Children with moderate or severe learning difficulties attend special teaching groups within normal schools. This is possible because of the wide range of support and facilities available to the teacher. In every region, flexible teaching groups, classroom assistants and educational consultants, together with a well developed service of aids and equipment, all help to ease the practical problems of educational integration.

The major problem now is how handicapped and able-bodied pupils relate to one another in school and out of it.

Many local educational authorities in Sweden are beginning to resent research which singles out handicapped pupils. Today researchers emphasize the importance of studying the entire class and the "classroom climate."

There is no movement in Sweden to return to special schools, but the need for special skills and services in normal schools and in the community is becoming increasingly evident. Such skills are in short supply because the effect of integration policies has been to spread too thinly the number of expert teachers in special schools and centres.

Pro-Integration educationalists in the UK would do well to bear this in mind.

**Lillemor Jernqvist**  
Lillemor Jernqvist is Senior Educational Psychologist, Department of Education and Social Studies, at The Society.

## INTERNATIONAL

### A trip to Gothenburg

Gothenburg, Sweden's west coast answer to Bristol, complete with harbour, hills and heavy rain, was the setting for "Communication Technology", a seminar sponsored by the International Cerebral Palsy Society last month. Organised by RBU, the Swedish society for cerebral palsy, the seminar attracted some 100 professionals from Europe and beyond to review recent developments in the application of communication technology.



A Swedish solution to housing design for the disabled. "If only we had those space standards in the UK", said Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Joyce Smith and I attended the seminar and the ICPS Annual Meeting. The meeting was poorly attended and uneventful, except for the news that James Loring, one-time Director of The Society, and President of ICPS for some years, had resigned. He will remain on the Executive Committee. The new president is Dr. Ciaran Barry from Dublin.

Mrs. Smith took the opportunity of visiting the world's first centre for studies in the environmental aspects of disability, the Department of Handicap Research at Gothenburg University.

Its academic head, and leader of the design team, is Professor Sven Olof Brattgard, 60, the



Professor Brattgard shows Mrs. Smith a revolutionary approach to wheelchair design. The mirrors show a person in the wheelchair from all angles. The floor is drawn on a metric plan so that the needs of the user can be immediately transferred.

originator and developer of the Fokus concept of independent housing in Sweden. A doctor of neuro chemistry, and disabled himself, he is now Chairman of Cerebral Palsy Overseas.

Dominating the department's work in recent years has been the development of a revolutionary range of wheelchairs. Chassis-built and styled by consultants from the auto industry, the electric version, The Besam Combi, is now in production in Sweden and will be available soon in selected world markets, including the UK and the USA.

The development of the earlier manual versions of this aid was undertaken in co-operation with The Spastics Society's research unit at Cheltenham before it was closed.

Mrs. Smith was able to see other projects involving seating and adapted controls for vehicles, which have been developed in conjunction with the Volvo Company.



Mrs. Joyce Smith tries out the new Besam Combi.

She also saw architectural interiors and kitchen equipment, some of which have found their way into our own Habinteg schemes — a concept base originally on the principles of Fokus.

Sweden has for many years been market leader, not only in the hardware of independent living for disabled people, but in its concepts and attitudes towards disability. This much was evident, not only from the work of Professor Brattgard, but also from the approach of the Swedish professionals who attended the ICPS seminar.

But why, one wonders, was the consumer so little in evidence, and his voice unheard on such a vital topic as communication?

Derek Lancaster-Gaye

### A friend in need

Dear Mr. Lancaster-Gaye, Thank you for your kind letter, received in the midst of heavy shelling and fierce war. Thank God none of the children and staff have been injured up until now. We are all gathered in the first floor of the building, trying to entertain and calm the children who had been cut off from their parents.

When war breaks out we feel our duty towards the handicapped becomes more challenging. We stiffen our will to continue our message: Letters, from friends such as you, raise our hopes.

**Nassib Solh,**  
Director General,  
Al-Amal Institute,  
Broummana,  
Lebanon.

Dear Mr. Solh, I have received your letter and felt I should reply to you straight away in view of the difficulties under which your letter was written. Please understand that we sympathise and share with you in these difficulties.

I hope very much that we shall be able to maintain close contact with you and you must let us know if there is a situation in which you would require some form of support or help. We pray that the war which has overtaken the Lebanon and its people will have no great or direct impact upon you and your charges, although I appreciate it is impossible not to be involved in one degree or another.

Our thoughts are very much with you at this time, and we shall look for more encouraging news in the days ahead.

**Derek Lancaster-Gaye,**  
Director, CPO.

## GET AWAY FROM IT ALL AT CHURCHTOWN FARM FIELD STUDIES CENTRE



Sailing, riding, rock climbing, canoeing, swimming, camping, bird watching, marine biology, photography, painting, pottery... it all happens at Churchtown Farm — the Field Studies Centre that's fully equipped to cater for people with any kind of disability.

To find more about the experience of a lifetime contact the Warden, Churchtown Farm, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall.  
Telephone 0208 872148.

### Integration work for Jonathan



Anne Stiernquist  
The integration of a handicapped child in a nursery school  
RADAR  
**Jonathan, too, goes to Day Nursery**

Jonathan is a Swedish boy who has cerebral palsy and cannot walk, sit or talk. But he has been successfully integrated into a day nursery near Stockholm, thanks to his own enthusiasm, and the work of his parents, the staff, and therapists from Stockholm's County Council Department

for the care of physically handicapped children and young people.

Anne Stiernquist, Jonathan's helper, tells in words and pictures what Jonathan does during his day, how he has developed movement and communication skills, and how he and the other children relate to one another.

"I find it fun and stimulating to work with Jonathan," she says. "He offers a great deal to me, the rest of the staff, and especially the other children. We feel that his presence in the group is an asset to all of us."

From her experience of working with mentally and physically handicapped children, Anne Stiernquist is a firm believer in integration. "There would be far less fear and prejudice shown towards handicapped people if more people had contact with them at an early age."

This heart-warming booklet has been well translated. It is available, price £2.50 including postage, from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB.



"My gosh, you look like a zebra!" said James Cox when he saw his father in full dress uniform on the day they went to Buckingham Palace for the investiture.

Vice Admiral Sir John Cox, KCB, chuckles at the memory. He is not a man to be swept overboard by titles and gold braid.

"Anyone in the Navy who relies on rank to lead does not succeed in leading," he told the Executive Council.

So when he starts his second career in the New Year, as Director of The Society, the "Vice Admiral" will have been dropped, and his authority will be tinged with humility. "I come as John Cox," he says. "I come to learn."

That he needs to learn so much, about The Society, about the field of disablement, has caused some concern.

Yet, as he points out, people are blonde, people are fat, people have cerebral palsy; they are all people. And the care of people has been his main concern for the last 37 years.

"If I have made any contribution in the Navy, it has been in the personnel field. I've also had a lot to do with the Navy Personnel Family Service, which is the Navy's part of the DHSS. I've dealt with youth all my life, with their families and their problems."

For a naval officer, and one as fit as he is — he still plays squash three or four times a week — he has shown a surprising ability to identify with disabled people.

"He felt it was important that people with cerebral palsy should be allowed to live dignified lives," recalled a disabled member of the Executive Council. "It is unusual for able-bodied people to lay such store by dignity, and it impressed me very much."

Apart from pastoral care, Sir John has had wide experience of administration, training, diplomacy and public relations. He has held ten commands at sea or ashore.

In 1956, aged 28, he commanded his first ship, and a year later he was mentioned in dispatches for distinguished service in Cyprus.

From 1976 to 1977 he was in charge of a Standing Naval Force in the Atlantic composed of



Sir John Cox at home with Rumples, his Great Dane.

## Sir John steers a new course

Mary Wilkinson meets the new Director

seven nations — and five nationalities of trade union. Then, for the next two years, he was Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, where he was responsible for twelve training establishments ranging from the Royal Naval Engineering College, through technical training schools to schools for operations and leadership training. In all, 28,000 people, 8,000 of them civilians.

From 1979 to 1982 he went to sea again before becoming Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm which has 10,000 uniformed personnel, 3,000 civilians, and annual operating costs of £250 million.

As Chairman of the Trustees of the independent Fleet Air Arm Museum, Sir John has had business experience, and he is also chairman of the committee which organises fund-raising and the distribution of funds for thirteen naval charities.

He has negotiated with industry and government departments at home and abroad, and acted as the Navy's spokesman on TV — most recently during the "Fish Wars" with Iceland. He has been chairman of the board of governors of a school.

"A mixed bag," he says, modestly.

What made him choose the Navy? Two reasons, apparently.

Born in Peking, the son of a diplomat, he had to escape from the Japanese in 1941. His father was interned, but the rest of the family managed to catch the last boat out of Shanghai, and eventually reached South Africa.

"In those days one travelled a lot by sea," he says laconically. "I loved the sea."

But affection is not enough. "You've got to do something you believe in. I believe in the Navy as a deterrent. Had I not believed it at any time, I would have come out."

A similar belief in the value of The Society has led him to accept this job where he has turned down others.

He sees the Director as the agent for the Executive Council. "They produce the policy and it is for me and my team to do the implementation."

He does not see himself as an initiator of policy. "I see myself as a servant of the Council but, equally important, I think, a servant of the regions. So therefore my first consideration would be to get to know the

people in the regions as soon as I can. It is only by hearing their worry beads that one can do one's task here."

Others see Sir John in a different light. "I don't think he will sit back and be just the megaphone for the Executive Council," said one. "I think he will fairly soon have his own views, and we are led to believe that he is good at putting them across."

At the moment, however, Sir John is cautious. He will not be drawn on the relative merits of maintaining a high public profile and providing services for cerebral palsied people. Nor will he hazard an opinion about how influential The Society could be, though he believes it should be "high in the first eleven."

Like his dog, Rumples, he likes to smell out a situation before making up his mind. He thinks this will take him a year. "One must be very careful that one is giving the right emphasis to everybody, for they are all giving of their time and commitment."

He talks of "a cascade of objectives," starting with main objectives at the top which must be translated down to something obtainable at every level and by every group.

On the role of cerebral palsied people in The Society, he is prepared to tread deeper. It all depends, he thinks, on what they can do. "The sky is the limit in terms of management or employment."

However, if they are to amount to more than a voice on the Executive Council, they must have expertise other than the experience of handicap — local group knowledge, for example, or (which he sees as vital) experience of running a large scale business.

"The Society is big business," he says, "and you've got to look at it in big commercial terms if it is to function and carry out its aims."

If cerebral palsied people can supply different forms of expertise, then he would be happy to see an Executive Council composed entirely of them. But he warned against voting cerebral palsied people on to the Executive Council "as a face saver."

Sir John had also given some thought to *Spastics News*. He enjoyed reading the paper — and was educated by it! "You

are trying to interest a whole lot more people outside The Society, and one way to do it is through a newspaper that is not just an in-house magazine. (But the in-house part is important too)."

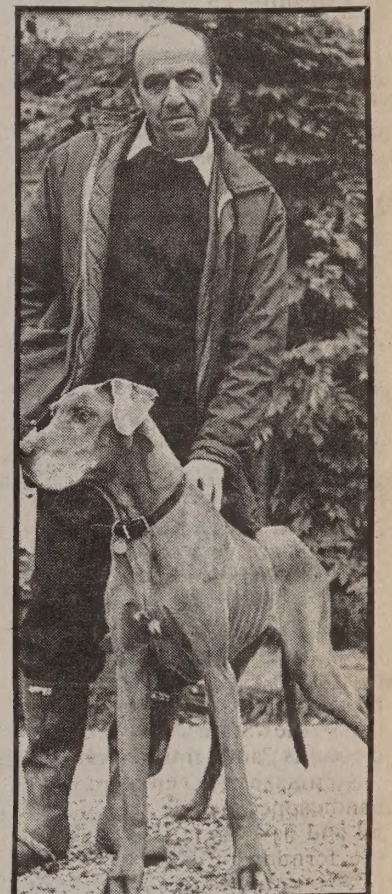
Being Director is a tough job involving, like the Navy, a lot of time away from home. How did the family react? With pleasure, apparently. His wife, Anne, is used to managing on her own and is busy working for an Open University degree. His children, James, 21, and Alex, 18, have "enormous social consciences." The irreverent James is studying Theology at Cambridge. Alex has just got 3 "A" levels, all Grade A, and will go to university next year.

Yet only the dog was willing to be photographed.

"We cherish our privacy," says Sir John, with a hint of steel in his voice. And indeed the family lives down an unmarked drive off an unmarked lane somewhere in Hampshire.

Sir John has been called many things in the last few weeks — "charming", "forceful", "a man of strength and stature."

He's no zebra.



Although Rumples is 17, she's always ready for a walk.

## VIEWPOINT

### An open letter to the new Director

Dear Sir John, We do not know each other but, since you will be in charge of the future of thousands of fellow cerebral palsied people, it is appropriate that I should familiarise you with the disability situation generally and this society particularly.

I have no way of knowing whether you intend to be a figure-head but, in my opinion, you should be pointing the way and re-shaping the future of The Society.

This society began from the founding work of parents and has done pioneering work. But it has outgrown the original



Chris Davies

parent group — mine were among them — and has developed into one of the most powerful forces in disability. However, so excellently has it done its work that it has created a new group of people who are seeking a growing influence within The Society, but are as yet largely unheard: the cerebral palsied themselves.

The Consumer Groups just given recognition are a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, too many CP people, being institutionalised in the many centres run by The Society and other organisations, are lethargi-

cally unaware of the opportunity this gives them to have some sort of influence. But "some sort of influence" is not how it should be.

You see, The Society of which you will shortly take charge is still predominantly for cerebral palsy and not of cerebral palsy. It retains an air of benevolent paternalism and prefers the softly-softly diplomacy of years gone by when modern situations require an updated attitude.

For example, consider the name of The Society. Factually "spastic" is just one of five variations of cerebral palsy. You may not know that "spastic" is used as a term of abuse against all disabled people. By perpetuating the term in its title, The Society actively endorses and encourages the insulting use of this phrase. To put it more bluntly, it is the equivalent of calling the "black movement" the "wog movement". But even that analogy is inaccurate because the black movement is an organisation of black people.

Please understand, as a confirmed integrationist, I am not recommending a take-over of The Society by CPs. I am saying that CPs should be in charge. Frankly, the time for having a CP Director is long overdue.

However, the choice has been made, by the same people who in their wisdom refused the opportunity to change the name of this newspaper, thus continuing an archaic and offensive image for all disabled people.

I do not expect that you have had personal experience of discrimination. For people who have a disability — any disability — discrimination is so common that by many it is considered to be a natural part of their lives and therefore unavoidable.

The Society has just endorsed the principle of anti-discrimination legislation, which would prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability. Once again a step, albeit small, forward. Why accept only the principle? Time and again

over the summer months we, the experts in disability — the people who have disabilities — have said, "We want this legislation and, moreover, we need it."

The job is yours. I wish you luck. I hope the seas you now have to sail are not too rough. But might I suggest a necessary first step. Take on board an expert navigator, ie. a severely disabled, but aware, person.

I want The Society to succeed; I owe it so much. But to succeed, it has to change tack. Yours sincerely,

Chris Davies

Chris Davies was educated at The Society's Thomas Delarue school. He is now Chairman of Interface Productions, a film and video company. "Attitude — the second handicap", filmed for BBC2, won second prize at the International Rehabilitation Film Festival last year. "America — we can do that" was part of an Open Door programme on BBC 2 in March this year. Other films are being prepared for Channel 4.



# Highlights from the AGM discussion groups

The AGM was an opportunity to glean views and ideas about The Society's work from nearly 360 people committed to the cause of disability. So after the formal meeting, people were invited to see the new film, *A Shift of Emphasis*, or to join one of four workshops.

Discussion was lively, and some interesting ideas emerged. But, perhaps most important, people of different opinions were brought together.

As someone in the "Attitudes" section put it, "The meeting ended with members of the group much closer than they had been before, having discussed some very personally threatening things, such as the role of parents in The Society. I also felt it helped a lot of people to understand much better current trends in The Society."

Here are some of the main points.

## Attitudes

**Anti-discrimination legislation.** This was generally supported as a means of controlling unfair treatment even if it would not change attitudes. Some people spoke out in favour of positive discrimination for disabled people.

There were complaints about discrimination: in obtaining insurance, in getting a job. The green card is seen by many handicapped people as a stigma. Lip service is paid by employers to the 3 per cent quota, and in one factory a doctor was asked by the employer to go around and find some handicapped workers to meet the quota.

Foremen and shop stewards need convincing as well as employers. Prejudice still exists among parents, children ("spastic" is still a term of abuse), and among the physically handicapped towards the mentally handicapped.

**Access.** It was suggested that this should be included in the training course of the Royal Institute of Architects.

**Integration.** The earlier the better, was most people's reaction.

**Paternalism.** The group which discussed this agreed that it was time for cerebral-palsied people to take "up front" roles in The Society, and that people who had been on the Council for ten or fifteen years should stand down. Regional conferences had attracted many bright, vocal, disabled people who The Society should be drawing on.

**Campaigns.** The same group agreed that Tadworth had been bad for The Society's image, but VAT had been good for it.

## Work

It was generally agreed that too much importance is attached to the work ethic. One idea was for leisure skills centres which would cater to both able-bodied and disabled people. It was suggested that The Society should look at ways of creating more of a balance between leisure and work, e.g. residents work for half the day and use leisure facilities for the other half. In this period of flux between work and leisure. The

Society should think twice before making sudden changes in the work centres.

## Public relations

**Political lobbying.** The suggestion of courses around the country for local groups and regions had a mixed reception. One group was strongly in favour of a combined press/lobbying course in each region geared to local needs and interests, and suggested that other charities should be invited too.

**Local publicity material.** More information about national campaigns. Model letters for lobbying MPs. Guidance on lobbying councillors and finding and presenting ideas for local press and radio. A catalogue of all promotional material. A publicity kit. Large posters.

**Improving lines of communication.** One group thought there was no problem. The other wanted regional headquarters to communicate more with local groups and more people from Park Crescent to visit the regions. A regular handout for county organisers on current issues and The Society's position on them was suggested.

**Spastics News.** Only one group discussed the new style and editorial policy. They approved!

## Living Options

**Integration.** As the principal of one centre put it, "Integration is a two-way process". He wanted The Society's centres to be part of the community by becoming

accessible to the community. They could offer facilities for adult education and use of the members' club. Many residents wanted this kind of integration.

The two problems of moving into the community are assessment and finding accommodation. Assessment procedures can be inappropriate and undignified. A social worker said that some housing departments require a 30-month independence training before hostel residents are put on the housing list. She wanted The Society to set up half-way houses.

**Provision for the severely disabled.** Another social worker said that the desire to leave home and go to a centre was not regarded by local authorities as sufficient reason for sponsorship. An Executive Council member asked if The Society should consider opening a unit for unsponsored residents which offered almost Part 3 level of assistance. The Society and Habinteg are proposing such a project in Milton Keynes.

It was suggested that parents take the initiative in developing residential care in the community, and become involved with day-to-day management.

The demand for places cannot be met, and The Society is establishing waiting lists. Although this type of care is expensive, it was thought in one group that The Society should establish a clear policy on residential provision.

**Housing.** It was suggested that The Society should demand that all new houses are accessible to wheelchair users.



Could it be The Society's old friends and making new weekend.



Three new members of the Executive Council: Sharon Hughes, Bill Hargreave, and another man.



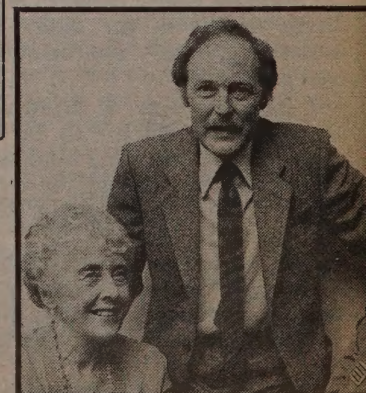
Above, Maria Brooks, who works at Neath Hill Professional Workshop, and Cyril Cattell, SRO for East Region.



Tim Yeo with honorary life membership, Shepherd, and Alex Moira.



Bernard Harding MBE, Chairman of Spastics Society, left, with Mrs. Secretary of the Devon and Somerset Society, and Nick Clarke, County Secretary.



Right, Derek Lancaster-Gaye, with Mrs. Ruth Anderson, Chairman of Blackpool and Fylde Spastics Group, and Mrs. Clarrie Williams, retired member of the Executive Council. Far right, Lois Booth, SRO for the South-East, Cindy Banks, Chairman of Isle of Sheppey Spastics Society, Derek Ashcroft and Linda Rudkin, Secretary of Cindy's group.



## Toys for the Handicapped

A wide selection of exciting well designed toys for disabled children. Swings and roundabouts with special supportive seats; interesting ideas in electronics including Micromate, (a switching device which enables handicapped children to play computer games and use programs), Pethna Reward Boxes, and designs by Mr. Jim Sandhu of HPRU; really sturdy tricycles and go-karts; board games that don't slip; all sorts of toys for home, school and hospital.

Please telephone or write for a free colour catalogue to Toys for the Handicapped, c/o Tube Plastics, Severn Road, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs. DY13 9EX. Tel: (0299) 4516, Ext. 11.



TFH Special Swing Seat, complete with straps and ropes, adjustable for rake and length, £34.50 (+ VAT)



# ty Time

heet, or the Park Crescent wine, or just the pleasure of meeting whatever it was, so many happy faces made a good start to the AGM

Jack Blake



ouncil. From left, Mrs. Joyce Smith and John Coombes, Chairman of the East Region.



From left, Mrs. Edna Thomas, wife of Iorwerth Thomas of the Executive Council, Mrs. Joan Williams, Chairman, Urmston and District Spastics Group, Nigel Smith, SRO for the North-West, Carol McGregor, Stockport Group, and Harold Sharpe, Barrow-in-Furness and District Group.



an Dawson-Maggi Barwick, left, talks to Les Unwin, of the Chesterfield and District Spastics Society, and his wife, Beryl.



From left, Lynn Ferguson, District Organiser for London Region, Denise Bloomfield, Walthamstow and District Spastics Society, and Sara Entwistle, SRO for London.



Winners of the Literary Contest gather with judges and guests after the prize presentation at The Society's Family Services and Assessment Centre, Fitzroy Square. From left to right, front row: Mark Youngs, Andrew Robertson, Jason Marques, Philip Stuckey, Jenny Waller, and Raymond Bunce. Back row: Irene Osborn, George Greenfield, Owen Davies, Eric Major (Managing Director of Hodder & Stoughton), Lady Mary Wilson, Tim Yeo, Jeffrey Archer and Diana Hutchinson.

## Literary Awards for 1983

Winners of The Society's 1983 Literary Contest came to Fitzroy Square in London on 20 October to attend a lunch reception in their honour and to receive prizes ranging from £15 to £50. They also heard that their prize-winning work is soon to be published.

The announcement was made by Jeffrey Archer, author of the novels *Kane and Abel* and *The Prodigal Daughter*. He told the winners and their families that he was donating the earnings from a year's public lending rights (the royalties drawn by authors when their books are lent by libraries) to publish a book of winning writing from this and previous Literary Contests.

"I am delighted to give this money. I'm hoping the book will be a best-seller in its own right," he said.

The book should be in the shops by September 1984. It will be a hard-backed volume, published by Hodder and Stoughton, and is expected to sell for around £5.

In addition to making this surprise announcement, Jeffrey Archer urged the winners to keep writing and to strive for ever-higher standards. He said that disabled people should not

be frightened to write about their experience of disability.

"You have experience and knowledge that we don't have. We will be fascinated by those subjects because we don't know about them."

The three judges also encouraged the winning writers. Lady Mary Wilson judged the poetry section. She said that, as in previous years, the work was of very high standard. It also defied stereotyped expectations.

"It was not just contemplative poetry — which you might expect from disabled people — there was quite a lot of very active poetry."

George Greenfield, one of London's leading literary agents and judge of the adult fiction and general interest articles, said he had been looking for both style and imagination in the entries. He found both in the winning fiction piece, *Coda*, by Andrew Robertson.

Diana Hutchinson, Women's Editor of *The Daily Mail*, praised the writing in the junior section.

The winners had plenty to say about their literary successes.

"I didn't think I had a ghost of a chance," said 15-year-old Mark Youngs, who won the junior section with his chilling ghost story, *The Keeper*.

Andrew Robertson, 58, was equally surprised to win. "It was absolutely terrific to hear I'd won. This will give me a boost to write a few more short stories."

While most of the winners had entered the Literary Contest never expecting to be successful, some had longed for recognition — like Owen Davies, 40, who won the general interest section with his comic account of learning to drive.

"It's wonderful to be published," he said. "It's what I've been waiting for."

### Adult

1st: Andrew Robertson, Harrow. (*Coda*).

2nd: Raymond Bunce, Portsmouth. (*A Second Chance*).

Highly commended: Owen Davies, Dunvant, Swansea. (*Return Journey*).

### Adult general interest

1st: Owen Davies, Dunvant, Swansea. (*Oh "L" it's Owen*).

2nd: Irene Osborn, Colne. (*Checky's Message*).

### Poetry

1st: Jason Marques, Braughing, Herts. (*In the Garden*).

2nd: Jenny Waller, Birmingham. (*A Mother's Day Message to my Children*).

### Children

1st: Mark Youngs, Grundisburgh, Suff. (*The Keeper*).

2nd: Philip Stuckey, Tiverton, Devon. (*Picture from Space*).

## A taste of the winning entries

In his winning piece, *Coda*, Andrew Robertson describes the feelings of a famous concert pianist after he discovers he is suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. The story opens as the man comes back to consciousness after attempting suicide.

Long, long afterwards he remembered how the light returned. Into the paint-box blackness of his mind a tiny silver thread came dancing, weaving, swaying, cutting the darkness into small pieces. Suddenly it stopped and was held motionless like a long-held flute note. It seemed to go on for ever — he wished it would end or that the conductor would bring him in.

He was aware of the tympani somewhere in the distance beating out a rhythm that he suddenly realised, with a shock, was his heartbeat. As the light increased, shadowy, amorphous figures formed and dissolved around him. Voices came and went, up and down.

"Any signs yet, Nurse?"

"Pulse still very weak, Doctor, but he seems to be holding his own."

"He'll pull though . . ."

The writer then moves back to describe the pianist's response as he hears his condition diagnosed by a consultant.

"Sorry to say . . . rheumatoid arthritis . . . unfortunately . . . stiffening of the fingers . . . helpful drugs."

His face, his words, his clothes, the room, began to merge into one gigantic collage of doom. The blunder, cream voice seemed to get louder until it drowned the noise of the traffic in the street below. Like some balloon his body appeared to swell until it filled every corner of the room blotting out the light from the window behind him. Suddenly, as if pricked by a pin, he resumed normal size and was apologizing for the fact that he would not be able to play the piano in two years.

"Of course, one can never tell . . . there might be a breakthrough . . . you never know . . . and teaching can be very valuable." A clever man, the consultant, he spoke several languages fluently, including cliché.

But disability need not only be viewed tragically. Owen

Davies, who won the general interest section, chose a humorous treatment. In his piece, *Oh "L" it's Owen*, he describes how he learned to drive in spite of cerebral palsy. Here Owen relives his first emergency stop.

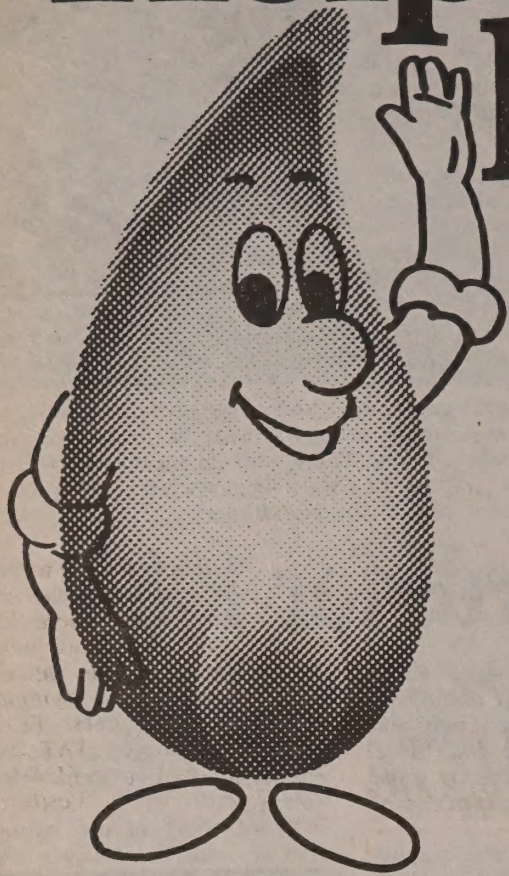
Then it happened, Clive hit the dashboard with his hand, I stopped, and all hell broke loose. Now without wishing to appear boastful, I must admit to being rather quick, in fact I was quite proud of my efforts as I sat back, allowing the vertebrae in my neck sufficient time to stop playing Musical Chairs and return to their normal position.

It was a great shame that poor old Clive's seat belt wasn't properly locked, because when I stopped, Clive kept going. It's a sad sight, seeing a qualified instructor reduced to a crumpled heap on the floor and his head in the glove compartment.

Ten minutes passed before he was back to normal, although his glasses were slightly bent, fair play, he did eventually praise me, despite the fact that his stop watch had vanished out of the window."



# "Help yourself to the help you need."



The gas people offer a wide range of help to those who need it most—elderly and disabled people.

If you have a disability—or have friends or relatives in need of help—here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you.

## COOKING

For those with hand disabilities, many gas cookers can be fitted with special handles and controls. And remember, most new gas cookers need no matches to light them, because they have automatic ignition.

If you are confined to a wheelchair, you may find either a cooker with a waist-level grill or a built-in cooker helpful.

For those with failing sight or blindness, special braille thermostats are available for most gas cookers, together with braille cooking charts.

## GAS FIRES

Many gas fires are available with easily accessible top controls, to save bending, and most fires light automatically when turned on.

And for those people with hand disabilities, a special tap adaptor may be fitted to a number of fires.

## CENTRAL HEATING

Gas central heating needs very little attention and can be set to your own particular pattern of living. Time controls and room thermostats help to save gas and keep running costs down.

## PAYING FOR GAS

The Code of Practice leaflet "Paying Electricity and Gas Bills" offers advice to domestic customers who are unable to pay their fuel bills because of real hardship. Copies of the Code are available from gas showrooms and local offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux and other advice centres.

If you are blind, severely sick or disabled, you should tell us so that an acceptable method of payment may be agreed with you and so avoid possible disconnection.

Pre-payment gas meters can be re-positioned at a convenient height for disabled people, and special extended handles are available.

## HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Go to your local gas showroom. If you cannot go, contact the Home Service Adviser of your Gas Region, who will be happy to call on you at home and provide advice free of charge. (You'll find the address and telephone number in your local telephone directory under GAS).

## MORE HELP

For information about other ways in which we can help—with safety and economy hints, for example, or with a choice of ways in which you can spread the cost of your gas more evenly throughout the year—contact your local Showroom.

## HELPFUEL SERVICES FROM THE GAS PEOPLE.

**ROSPA** British Gas supports RoSPA and Age Concern in its 'Home Safety in Retirement' Campaign. **AGE CONCERN**



# naidex'83

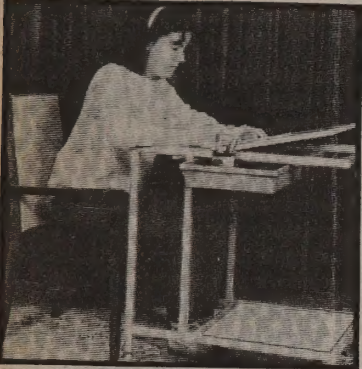
Naidex's tenth birthday exhibition was held at the new Alexandra Pavilion in London. From 12-14 October, thousands of people including representatives from The Society, admired new products and equipment displayed on over 150 stands. But they often arrived peeved and went away exhausted.

Barry Hassell, who was there for micro-technology aids, read that "special trains running every ten minutes from Kings Cross reach Alexander Palace in just 8 minutes." It took him an hour.

Alice Moira, who came to see wheelchairs, and was in one herself, found "a glorified traffic jam" at the narrow entrance, and congested aisles. "There was nowhere to try out wheelchairs properly," she said.

Occupational therapists, Anne O'Connell and Janet Ciddor, had a hard job getting round an exhibition that spilled into another area connected by a narrow, uneven passage. Even exhibitors had to park a mile away from their stands.

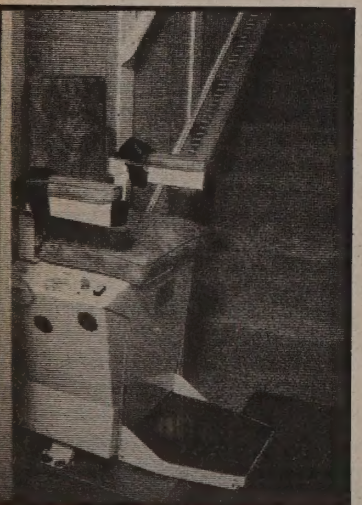
Naidex, it seems, has become too successful for its own good.



The Brenco Handi-Aid is a table on castors with a tilting top, storage surface and drawers. It can be used over a bed, a chair or a wheelchair. Brakes can be fitted to make it steady when parked. Doubles as a walking aid, but consult your physiotherapist first. £85-89 (drawer extra), from M. Brennan & Co, 35 Upper Library Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT1 2JH.



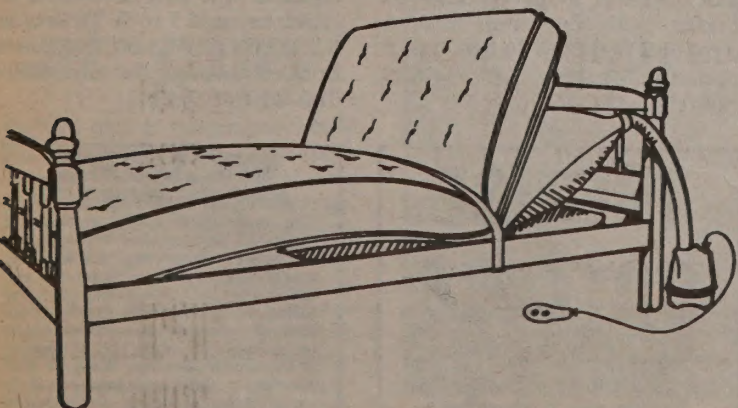
The W System Flex from Denmark offers a full range of kitchen units which can be adjusted to the working level of any able-bodied or disabled user. Particularly useful where there is a turnover of residents, or for assessment. Contact F. Llewellyn & Co., Carlton Street, Liverpool L3 7ED.



Ease is the first battery powered stairlift we have come across. This system, price £1,550 is for straight staircases. A version for

curved stairs is in preparation. From East Anglian Stair Elevators Ltd, The Street, Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

For people who cannot operate a tap, the bathroom fittings from Italy should be a great help. The Gran Sasso water tap (not shown) is controlled by an electronic photo-cell. Water flows when hands are put under the tap, and stops when hands are removed. (The water temperature would have to be pre-set by someone with good hand function.) There is also an electronic soap dispenser and hand dryer. Recently a kitchen tap has been added to the range. Available from Clos o Mat (Great Britain) Ltd, 2 Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 3SS.



Marcon Bed Elevators can be used on any ordinary beds. When a switch is pressed, the pillow end of the bed is raised. Helpful for getting someone out of bed or keeping him propped up. £149 single, £179 double. Marcon Bed Elevators, P.O. Box 31, Dorking, Surrey RH5 5SU.



Conpack's Butler lifting wheelchair is a new concept in wheelchair design. Sitting in an "armchair", you can be lifted up to 15 in, rotated full circle, moved backwards and forwards, go through a doorway and over small obstacles. From £3,249. Available through Newton Aids, The Spastics Society's service to the disabled, Meadway Works, Garretts Green Lane, Birmingham B33 0SQ.



The modular design of the Fortress 650FS deluxe power chair allows the customer to choose from a variety of seat options. For transporting, it comes to pieces (though the pieces are quite heavy.) It has wide, pneumatic tyres, a turning radius of less than 30 in, a swivel seat, and easily accessible battery and motor. Fortress Scientific (U.K.) Ltd, Hayes Road, Southall, Middx UB2 5LZ.

## Microtechnology

I visited Naidex looking for new products which take advantage of micro and other technologies — and was disappointed. Concerned Technology, an exhibition within an exhibition, was more rewarding, though some of the stands were unmanned.

The Elfin system was impressive. Described as an advanced communication aid, it has the advantage of being based around a commercially available computer, the Video Genie. As an environmental controller, it can control up to 16 appliances through the household ring-main circuits. It is also a communications system with limited capacity as a word processor. Remote control/teletext adaptors allow it to control any conventional television set.

When the DHSS evaluated the equipment, it decided that the Elfin's specification was too elaborate for its requirements, although at £2,000 the Elfin is cheaper than some of the DHSS environmental controllers.

The Toucan Communicator allows a physically disabled person with speech impairment to hold a face to face conversation anywhere. This portable communications system weighs about 2½ kilograms and can be controlled by hand, foot, mouth, chin, or other switches. The message is displayed on two liquid crystal display screens which can be illuminated in the dark.

Barry Hassell

## Wheelchairs

Fresh ideas plus new technology are giving wheelchairs a new appearance and greater adaptability. There is now a wheelchair that folds up like a child's buggy and another that lifts you up to reach something from a cupboard. From Kempf comes a wheelchair which will even respond to the human voice.

Kerb climbers are getting lighter, like the one on the B.E.C. 40 Horizon portable powered wheelchair; the Phoenix chair from Conpack has a fifth wheel instead.

More chairs are adjustable and can be tailored to the needs of children or adults.

Alice Moira



Convaids Compax 17C wheelchair weighs 23 lbs and folds up like a child's buggy. Useful as a transit chair for teens or adults. £241. Further information from The Mobility Aids Centre, 88D South Street, Stanground, Peterborough PE2 8EZ.

## The Rigid

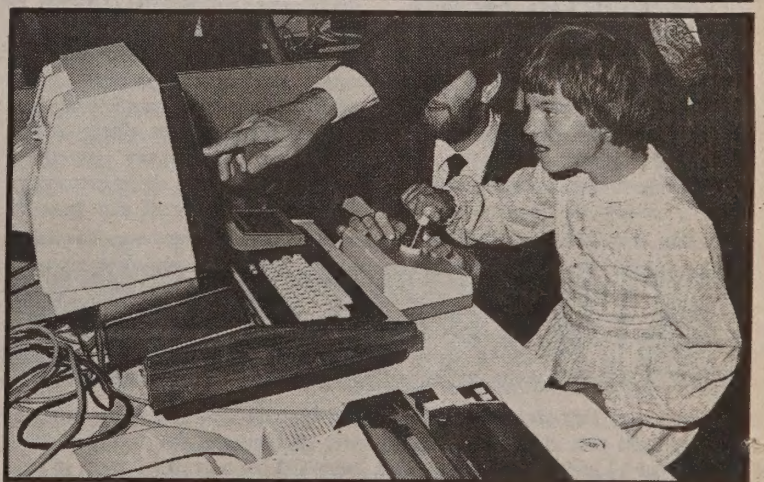


"The Rigid" has been designed as an ultra-lightweight chair for sports. Aerospace materials and design give it high mobility and easy handling. 29 optional features including castors and wheels. Quadra Wheelchairs Inc, 311117 Via Colinas, Westlake Village, CA 91362, USA.

Carter's Rainbow folding wheelchairs (left) are cheerful and reasonably priced. There are adult, narrow and junior models, with solid wheels, detachable arm rests and swinging detachable footrests. From £158.70 (including VAT and carriage) from Carters (J. & A.) Ltd, Aldred Street, Westbury, Wilts BA13 3DZ.



Flex wheelchairs, made by Brio, come in three sizes for children up to 15, and have fully adjustable parts and red cushion seats and backs. There is an anti-tipping bar. Around £270, from Everest and Jennings, 21 Princewood Road, Corby, Northants.



Trying out the Elfin takes concentration. The communication aid is available from Elfin Systems, Byard Road, Gloucester GL2 6DF.



Two can talk using the Toucan Communicator. It was developed with the help of The Society for Christopher Richards, a resident at the Bedford Centre in Buxton. A standard feature is a serial interface which allows the Toucan to be connected to many types of micro computers. £555 from Toucan (Communication Aids) Ltd., Bank Chambers, 37a Nantwich Road, Crewe CW2 6AF.



# Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

## Odd one out

"We have twin girls, aged 8. Samantha has cerebral palsy and Julie is very active. We also have Nicholas who is now 3. We are finding it difficult to give enough time to each of the children, as their needs and interests are so different. Samantha is severely physically handicapped though very intelligent and she finds it hard not to be able to join in all Julie's activities. She also gets frustrated as she feels that Nicholas is catching up with her. She often gets very impatient with him and he doesn't quite understand her problems yet. Have you any suggestions?"

I can understand how difficult it must be for you both to apportion your time between your three children when their needs and interests are so obviously different. It is important, however, to help the children to appreciate that each of them is a member of the family, with equal claim on your love and caring.

There will, of course, be times when one or other of the children will need more help and support than the others and because of Samantha's disability she will have to have more continued support for a longer period. This will, no doubt, be as frustrating to her as to the other children. It must be quite hard for her to accept that her twin sister and even her young brother can do more than she can, but this is going to be a life-long problem for her to face and learn to cope with.

I expect there will be things that Samantha can do better than Julie and Nicholas too. It would be a good idea to identify and emphasise Samantha's skills and to point them out to all the children.

Do you think Samantha would like to help in "looking after" Nicholas? Perhaps there are things that she can do for him: could she read to him or tell him stories? I am sure she would find it easier to cope with his

activity if she could feel that there are skills that she has that he does not.

This is a problem that many families face, and I do hope that you find some other parents in a similar position with whom you can talk things over.

Are there any special clubs or social activities that Samantha could join in locally? She may also like to consider having a holiday with other disabled children. Nowadays there is a wide range of exciting holidays available, many of which take able-bodied children as well.

## Toys for Christmas

"My niece has a little boy who is very severely handicapped — he really can't use his hands at all and he has to be propped up in a special chair. I would like to give Robert a toy for Christmas that he could play with and it is very difficult to know what might be suitable. Robert is 7, but I think he is more like a 3 year old in his development. Have you any ideas, please?"

Choosing toys for children who have severe handicaps can be a problem and spending a lot of money on a toy that a child cannot enjoy is both disappointing and expensive. I think you could probably get some useful ideas from the books mentioned below and The Spastics Society's Family Services and Assessment Centre, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ, has lists of toys which are suitable for children with different types of handicap.

The Toy Libraries Association, Seabrook House, Wyllyotts Manor, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1HL, is also a very good organisation to contact as they have a great deal of practical experience and there are many toy libraries in many parts of the country. Your niece may like to take Robert along to the nearest toy library to their home to try out different types of toys and special equipment.

Nigel Tuckett



*The Good Toy Guide 1983*, published by the Toy Libraries Association and Inter-Action Print, price £2.95, has a chapter on toys for people with special needs.

*Easy to Make Toys for Your Handicapped Child* by Don Caston, Human Horizon Series, £5.95, might also be helpful.

## Rate relief?

"We have recently moved into another area where the rates are much higher than where we lived before. I am physically handicapped, though my wife is not, and I have heard that we might be able to claim some rate relief. Is this true?"

Yes, it is true. People with disabilities can qualify for certain rate reductions which are not means tested. You should contact your new local authority Rates Department and they will send you the appropriate form. You may also like to get a copy of the Department of the Environment's free leaflet, *Rate Relief for Disabled Persons*, which is available from Distribution Section, Building No. 3, Victoria Road, South Ruislip, Middx.

## OBITUARY

### Trevor Davies

It was with great sadness that the Wales Region of The Spastics Society learned of the death of Trevor Davies in August this year.

It was particularly sad as Trevor had only retired as Warden of Brynawel Adult House Unit in Cardiff in July, after thirteen years' service. During their years of service he and his wife, Margaret, had continually strived to make Brynawel a home in every sense of the word, and as in all families he, Margaret and the residents spent many happy holidays together both in this country and on the Continent.

Trevor succeeded in making Brynawel a focal point in the community, and many local organisations were involved in the social evenings that were held there. He will be greatly missed by all those in the Wales Region who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Moi Pritchard

## CLASSIFIED

### For sale

RAYMAR Amigo Scooter for sale. Fitted with electric seat lift, swivel seat, dual wheels for added stability and shopping basket at the front. Two speeds. Maintenance-free dry cell battery charger. Only 18 inches wide. Folds into back of most cars. Good condition, £1,000 new. Will accept £650 o.n.o. — Contact J. M. Linsell, Downside Hostel, Wildings Road, Bracknell, Berks.  
PASHLEY TRICYCLE FOR SALE. £50 o.n.o. Tel: Witham 515920 during the evening.

# Announcements

The Spastics Society is offering a special promotion offer of 10 Christmas card designs to its shops, groups and staff engaged in fund raising. The cards — which are all overprinted with The Spastics Society caption — have been specially commissioned for this promotion and are available through Spastics Cards. The offer consists of 10 packets of each of the 10 designs. There are 6 cards and envelopes per packet and each packet carries its own price label. The cost of each offer pack is £32.50 with carriage and packing free. Selling price is £65. Contact Maura Taylor, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

Lady Allen of Hurtwood Memorial Trust Scholarships for £600 are available from April 1984, to enable people working with young children, particularly disabled children, to travel in order to extend their knowledge and experience. Applications must be submitted by 1 January, 1984. Application forms and further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Lady Allen of Hurtwood Memorial Trust, The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, 40 Brunswick Square, London, W1N 1AZ.

Marks and Spencer are opening their Marble Arch store on November 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. to allow disabled people to do Christmas shopping. The whole store will be open and there will be plenty of staff on hand.

Talking Books for the Handicapped caters for the reading needs of sighted people who cannot read because of physical or mental disability. A Talking Book Player is provided free on loan to each member, and there are about 1,000 titles available. Each member pays an annual subscription of £15 towards postal costs, part or all of which may be paid by local authorities. For further information and an application form write to: Talking Books for the Handicapped, 12 Lant Street, London, SE1 1QR. Tel: 01-407 9417.

City Limits, one of London's "What's On" magazines, has just begun a disability coding system. At present, the system is only used in the cinema and theatre sections, but it is eventually to be extended throughout the magazine. The code indicates venues where hearing aid systems are installed, and rates accessibility at each place. Information for this coding was provided by Artsline, the telephone advice service on the arts in London for people with disabilities and special needs. For more detailed information contact Artsline, from Tuesday to Friday between noon and 4 p.m., and between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday. Tel: 01-625 5666/7.

"London made Easy for the Over 60s" is a new booklet published by the London Tourist Board in conjunction with the Greater London Council. The booklet is designed both to encourage senior citizens to get out and see London, and also to inform disabled people about wheelchair accessibility and facilities for the visually handicapped and hard of hearing. The publication is intended to supersede LTB's "London for the Disabled Visitor", and includes a key showing which public buildings have toilet facilities for the disabled and where the disabled person will need an escort. It is available from London Tourist Board Tourist Information Centres, price 40p, or by post from the Sales Department, London Tourist Board, 26 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DU, price 60p, including p & p.

Lions International and The Mobility Information Service have introduced a new driver assessment unit capable of coping with a wide range of physical disabilities. The unit consists of specially designed simulator with a range of adaptations. It is housed in a towable module so that it can easily be transported to schools, colleges and homes. The unit gives the disabled person an opportunity to assess his or her potential as a driver, both in the simulator machine and in the towage vehicle, which is a fully automatic transmission saloon car, fitted with hand controls. David Griffiths, founder of Mobility Information Service, and himself disabled, is in charge of the unit. Inquiries to David Griffiths. Tel: 0743-68383 or 0952-507653.

Curious Caterpillar By Post has just brought out its 1983-84 catalogue, full of fascinating small toys and gifts which can be mail ordered at very reasonable cost. There are 20 items for 10p or under and 136 items costing less than one pound. Curious Caterpillar is happy to offer a quantity discount to charities or groups raising money for genuine children's organisations. Tel: Hitchin 34256 for a copy of the catalogue or discount details.

Unicorn Theatre for Children is holding a signed performance of its production *Nogging The Nog and the Firecake* on Saturday, 10 December. The main auditorium also has an induction loop system for those hearing-impaired children who do not rely on signing. There are three wheelchair spaces in the theatre and toilet facilities for the disabled. The play begins at 2.30 p.m. at The Unicorn Theatre, Great Newport Street, London W2, and is suitable for children aged 5 to 9. Tickets are £2, £2.80 and £3.60, and can be booked through the box office. Tel: 01-836 3334.

## WHEELCHAIRS

**ASHLEY MOBILITY**  
Sole Distributors for Vessa Ltd's Range of Power and Hand-propelled Wheelchairs in the Midlands, Powys, Avon and Somerset. Also Everest & Jennings Distributors and BEC and Batrac Agents. Distributors for the Elswick Envoy car for the disabled in the Midlands, Avon and Powys. All these makes are available on 'Motability' H.P., to recipients of the Mobility Allowance. Always a good selection of secondhand power chairs in stock. Write for details and coloured brochures.  
FREEPOST, Birmingham B25 8NR. Tel: 021-772 5364 or Ashley Mobility (Worcester), FREEPOST, Worcester, WR4 9BR. Tel: 28575 or Ashley Mobility, FREEPOST, Weston super Mare, Avon. BS23 3BR. Tel: 28911.

## TREZISE COTTAGE

Purpose-designed for all-year-round holidays for families with a wheelchair.

Send SAE for details to: Mrs. Russell, Trezise, St. Martin, Helston, Cornwall TR12 6EF.

# What's On

Centre on Environment for the Handicapped is holding a seminar on the ethos and philosophy of Centres for Independent Living on Monday, 28 November from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Small Hall, Kensington Town Hall, London. Chairman of the seminar will be Dr. Mike Oliver, lecturer in Special Educational Needs, Avery Hill College. The fee will be £21 plus £3.15 VAT, or £19 plus £2.85 VAT to members of CEH. There are 30 places available for those who are not backed by a fee-paying organisation. Those interested in attending this seminar should send for an application form to CEH, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF, and return the completed form by Friday, 18 November.

The Spastics Society is holding a one-day conference entitled "Neonatal Intensive Care: A Dilemma of Resources and Needs" on Thursday, 1 December. The conference will be held at the Tara Hotel, Scarsdale Place, Kensington, London W8 and will be chaired by Renee Short MP and Tim Yeo MP. Fee for the day, including lunch and follow up report is £11.50. To reserve a place on the conference contact Gill Parker at The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

The annual SOS Christmas concerts will be on Saturday 10 December at 4 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. at the Royal Festival Hall. Tickets are available at the box office from Thursday 10 November. Stars due to appear at the concerts include Dame Vera Lynn, Elaine Paige, Tim Rice and Gillian Humphreys. The Desborough School Choir from Maidenhead and Pro-Musica of London, will be singing.

The Aidis Trust will be showing their new film, "There but for the Grace of God", about communication through computers for disabled people, at 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ at 16.30 and 18.00 hours on 14 December, 1983.



## OUTLOOK

John Byworth



Tony Newton MP presents Sian Vasey with the keys to her special Mini Metro, watched by Michael Barry of the Rotary Club of London.

### Motoring

#### The Price of Mobility

Tony Newton, MP, Minister for the Disabled, presented the first "Joystick" conversion car to a disabled driver at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, on 28 September.

In his opening speech, he pledged continuing Government support for the Motability scheme.

I was also glad that he believed there should be improvements in conversion technology and that cars should be fitted round people, not people round cars. He appreciated the need for several agencies to co-operate in meeting the costs of substantially modified and therefore expensive cars.

Mrs. Sian Vasey, 27, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, received a special Mini Metro.

Sian lives in a purpose-built flat in Ealing. She has taken a degree course, been involved with the Graeae Theatre Company, and now works in the Civil Service. But she is confined to a wheelchair and can only exert a very little force with her hands and arms. She faces many of the problems that are experienced by people who have cerebral palsy.

A car for Sian required extensive and revolutionary adaptations. The most extensive conversion was to joystick steering, which cost £2,000 more than the car. Because Sian has little force in her arms, she can only steer a car electronically, using a small control, which can, in fact, be positioned anywhere in the car and operated with hands or feet.

To give more space for her wheelchair, a left-hand drive model was used, and the steering wheel remained in position so that the car could be driven by an able-bodied person if necessary. I would like to be around the first time Sian takes the car out on her own with nobody behind the steering wheel!

To give Sian total mobility and independence, she needed a system which would allow her to get in and out of her car unaided. In this case, the Car Chair was fitted, a wheelchair designed for indoors, outdoors and car travel combined with a unique lift and transfer mechanism. It is similar to the Freelancer from Mobility International (see *Spastics News* April 1983). But this Car Chair is designed to fit most cars and can be transferred to a new one, which allows the old car to be re-converted and increases its resale value.

These major modifications led to many others. Instruments

had to be transferred, and the gear lever, foot pedals and ancillary switches had to be re-positioned. The result is an extremely cleverly designed Metro which will enable Sian to live more independently.

#### The cost

Austin Rover Metro 1.3 automatic (left hand drive) incl. 22 per cent discount, delivery and number plates £4,108.72  
Joystick steering £6,650.00  
General adaptations: Cam brake and gear selector; Special panel with controls for ignition, lighting, wipers, washer and choke; Electric windows; Mounted brake and accelerator pedals (10 in. higher) £800.00 (approx.)  
Car Chair system £2,200.00  
Total £13,758.72

#### Who paid?

Motability provided £4,829.48 from their Fund Development Office. It provided the car through the scheme at a very cheap rate, and it is also paying for some of Sian's driving lessons.

The Rotary Club of London gave £2,500 towards the joystick steering and £430 towards the Car Chair unit.

Ealing Social Services Department helped with the cost of the Car Chair and so did other charities and trusts.

Sian Vasey contributed £1,200 towards the car and is handing over her mobility allowance of £18.30 a week for four-and-a-half years in accordance with the hire purchase agreement.

An expensive car. But it has been done, and it will be done again. The physically disabled have the same desire for independence as anyone else, and it is now becoming more possible to provide vehicles for them.

Money must not become a greater barrier than disability.  
John Byworth

For further information about buying a specially adapted car, contact Motability, 4 Carlton Gardens, London SW1, tel: 01-839 5611.

### Arts

#### Community Project

In a three week showcase of performances, workshops, seminars and conferences Project Ability has given the citizens of Glasgow a taste of the diverse creative activities they plan to make available to people with or without disabilities.

Project Ability has been based at the Third Eye Centre since June. Between 8 and 29 October there was a full schedule of events, including an exhibition called Artists Unlimited, a talk with musician Ian Dury, Graeae Theatre's latest production, Voice Workshops by singer Frankie Armstrong, as well as concerts, films, poetry and prose readings and discussions.

The organisers place particular emphasis on taking Project Ability out into the community, so events were not confined to the Third Eye Centre. Workshops and performances were held in local institutions, schools and day care centres. The Literary Adviser, Gerry Loose, said that activities which involved audience participation were even more successful than performances where the audience was static.

In the next nine months Project Ability aims to carry on the initiatives of these three weeks by encouraging the creative skills of people with disabilities both artists and performers. It will also seek more equipment and facilities and heightened public awareness of the issues.

Wendy Andrews

For further information about Project Ability contact Veronica Matthew, Third Eye Centre, 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3JD, tel: 041-332 9783.

### Books

#### Water Sports for the Disabled

British Sports Association for the Disabled (Water Sports Division)

(EP Publishing, £9.95, obtainable from educational bookshops or from L. Warren, National Co-ordinator, BSAD, Water Sports Division, 29 Iron-latch Avenue, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 9JE, in which case allow extra for p & p).

Disabled people must not be denied the pleasures of water sports. That is the message of the team of experts who have written this book for the British Sports Association for the Disabled. It may seem a simple message, but it is one that has been ignored frequently, or even contradicted.

The handbook covers angling, canoeing, rowing, sailing, coastal cruising, sub-aqua, water skiing, power boating, model yachting and swimming. Several of the authors, being themselves disabled, realise that these sports, which once seemed out of reach, can now provide a rewarding experience. For a time difficulties and handicaps can be almost forgotten.

Details are given of the thorough training needed to enable handicapped children and adults to participate fully. Emphasis is placed on medical and safety considerations, and

recommendations are given on special equipment. Problems of access are dealt with. An important section is devoted to water sports for those who suffer from mental handicap.

Besides appealing to disabled people, the handbook will also be an essential aid to helpers, coaches, course organisers, water authorities, sports clubs and organisations for the handicapped. It is fully illustrated with black and white photographs and line drawings.

Stephen Williams

#### Hard Times - Tories and Disability

by Ros Franey

(The Disability Alliance, 21 Star Street, London W2 1QB, £1)

Hard Times starts out with the premise that while the Conservatives made it clear that they believed disabled people were an underprivileged minority worthy of support, in fact the Government has made their lives harder to bear.

The report paints a particularly black picture of the way in which their living standards have deteriorated as a result of Tory policies: between 1979 and 1983, the Conservative Government made cuts in social security totalling £2 billion. The report also highlights the other Conservative measures — including the Housing Benefit and Statutory Sick Pay schemes, and the massive rises in NHS charges — all of which have had a detrimental effect on disabled people generally and those relying on social security in particular.

Ros Franey also criticises those policies which have forced local authorities to cut, or charge for, vital services such as home helps, housing adaptations and day care places.

She points to further reductions in public housing expenditure. For example, from 1979 to 1981 the number of specially designed "mobility" houses for severely disabled people which local authorities started building fell by 65 per cent. In the housing sector they dropped by 98 per cent.

As a digest of facts and figures in support of the report's basic premise, lobbyists and campaigners will find *Hard Times* an extremely useful reference document. However, anyone looking for an in-depth analysis of Thatcherite policies as they relate to disabled people will be disappointed.

Linda Avery

### Young Outlook

#### C.A.T.S. at play

Puppet play is helping mentally handicapped children in North London to express themselves and to develop their imaginations. Every day twelve children attend the puppet therapy centre in Tottenham organised by C.A.T.S. (The Children's Aid Team). They learn to read and write, paint, act, dance, perform and entertain with puppets.

The puppets are used at many fund raising events for C.A.T.S. and groups of school children are welcome to see a performance. The puppeteers hope to put on daily shows for the public soon.



Putting puppets through their paces — The Children's Aid Team goes into action.

Besides the puppet centre, C.A.T.S. also runs a number of other services, including a 24-hour crisis service for parents of mentally handicapped children

and a support service for 200 families with disabled children in North London. C.A.T.S. also provides an information service. Recently, C.A.T.S. opened its

first residential centre for 7 mentally handicapped people. Its new dance centre for disabled people will be in operation in time for Christmas.

### Competition

The results of the competition to paint the Editor of *Spastics News* will be announced in the December issue.

In all, the organisation runs 14 different schemes to help disabled people in North London. The Manpower Services Commission is paying the salaries of those workers on the schemes who would otherwise be unemployed, but that will only last for one year.

If you can donate money, have any bright fund-raising ideas, or have spare "puppet-making" material e.g. wood, socks, string, cardboard, of if you would like to become a C.A.T.S. volunteer, please contact Lisa Charalambos or Magie Potter, Tel: 01-808 4965/6.

Carmen Rebello



## If at first you don't succeed . . .

The Charities VAT Reform Group launched its 1983-4 campaign on 21 October, spurred on by Tim Yeo, John Hannam, MP, leader of the All Party Disablement Group, and Lord David Ennals, a former Social Service Secretary. 30 charities out of a possible 147 members were represented.

"This is a campaign which will succeed — but not if you slacken off", warned David Ennals.

Reviewing the past year, Tim Yeo found strong justification for continuing the campaign. VAT had become an issue with which the public could identify. The concessions granted so far had been largely due, he believed, to the pressure for VAT relief. The cost of VAT relief, estimated this year by the Institute of Fiscal Studies at £20 million, was little compared to the £360 million which the Chancellor had already given away in concessions to charities, including those with "limited or controversial" aims.

The group had countered the Treasury's argument that granting VAT relief would be a "massive undertaking". The government now admitted that only 100,000 charities would be eligible, but further research by the group showed that less than 50,000 charities could claim.

Finally, another anomaly had been created: VAT relief had been extended to Health Authorities who contract out their services.

David Ennals thought it was

unreasonable for the government to reward privatization in the National Health Service while withholding VAT relief from charities whose services supplement the NHS. "It doesn't make sense", he said.

Anticipated cuts in grants to voluntary organisations next year would offer the group another argument, he added.

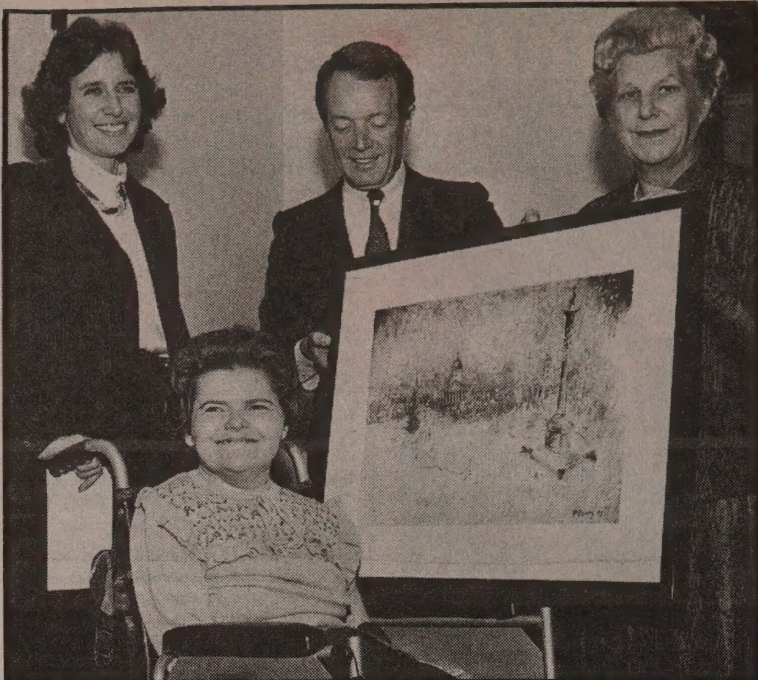
It was decided to bring pressure on the Chancellor of the Exchequer in time for the next budget, and to table an early day motion. In itself, the motion could change nothing, but if some 300 signatures could be secured, the government would be impressed.

"It is the campaign that we can build up in the country which will in the end produce the results we want to see", said John Hannam. He urged everyone to write to their local MP asking if he or she would sign the motion. While Ministers cannot sign they can be asked if they support the campaign. MPs pay attention to questions put by constituents.

Around January, the Chancellor takes advice from MPs about making smaller concessions. "We need MPs to say 'VAT'" said David Ennals.

A meeting will be held at the House of Commons in December for new MPs.

Charities were asked to include the VAT figure in their published Accounts and to mention it in their annual reports. They were urged to write independently to the Chancellor.



Pat, with the painting. From left to right: Olga Polizzi, Director of Trusthouse Forte, Pat Bowry, Giuseppe Pecorelli, Managing Director of Trusthouse Forte Hotels Ltd., and Mrs. Joyce Smith.

## Pat's Christmas Commission

Pat Bowry, a resident of The Society's Princess Marina Centre in Buckinghamshire, has been commissioned by Trusthouse Forte to provide the painting which will be used on the company's 1983 Christmas card. Pat and her husband Brian came to the Cumberland Hotel, London, on 27 October to receive a cheque for £200 from Olga Polizzi, director of Trusthouse Forte and daughter of Lord Forte.

"I started painting when I was at school, and it has gradually grown from there," explained Pat. "I couldn't believe it when I was told I'd won the commission."

In previous years Trusthouse Forte has usually commissioned professional artists to produce a Christmas card design, but this year the company decided to commission a promising artist with a disability. Trusthouse Forte asked The Society to collect paintings from which a choice for the Christmas card could be made. Pat's snow

scene was unanimously chosen.

"It is a sensible business arrangement and we want to do it again next year," said Alyson Playford, who as Product Manager for Trusthouse Forte is responsible, among other things, for commissioning the annual Christmas card. "Next year we will allow more time so that more disabled artists have a chance to put their work forward."

At the presentation Trusthouse Forte also announced it will be buying all eight paintings in the final group from which Pat's was chosen. The paintings will be displayed in a room in one of the company's London hotels.

## Capp in hand

This month, 2,000 new collection boxes will start going into pubs and shops all over the country. On them will be a figure familiar to readers of the *Daily Mirror*.

Reg Smythe, the cartoonist, has contributed a picture of Andy Capp, free, to The Society. Every time you put in a small coin, up goes Andy's beer arm towards the word Cheers!

The new boxes also have a space for larger coins and notes. According to Christopher Robinson, Senior Appeals Development Officer, £1 coins are a popular contribution. "One of our boxes had ten of them", he said with glee.



Look out for Andy in your local pub or shop.

## Jackie meets a Princess

Doug McKenzie



H.R.H. Princess Alexandra talks with Jackie Birtles, a resident of Good Neighbours House, at the Bob Hope Classic Gala Dinner on 20 September at Grosvenor House, London. The dinner was put on by the Stars Organisation for Spastics. With Jackie are the Principal of Good Neighbours House Liz Mitchelmore-Hawkins, and the Deputy Principal Roger Hughes. Talking in the background are the Chairman of the SOS Tim Rice, The Hon. Angus Ogilvy and Past-President of the SOS The Hon. Mrs. James Ogilvy.

## Record breaker

The Society's 1983 summer appeal launched at the end of May, has broken all previous summer appeal records. Donations amount to £490,000, in comparison with last year's total of £460,000, and the special covenant effort increased from £15,000 in 1982 to £33,000 this year.

John Rowe, Head of Mailing Appeals, is hoping for similar success with the Christmas appeal, which has just been launched. "Our target figure is £1,908,000 total gross income."

## Spastics News

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## Bob Wareing's Bill is published

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) Bill has been published.

Bob Wareing's Bill will make it illegal to discriminate against people anywhere in the British Isles on grounds of disability. It covers people with physical, sensory, communication and mental illness and mental handicap.

The Bill seeks to establish a Disablement Commission similar to the Equal Opportunities Commission, which will promote the integration of disabled people into society, investigate complaints of discrimination and where appropriate take legal action, and recommend to the Secretary of State what may be regarded as reasonable and unreasonable acts of discrimination. Like a Parliamentary Select Committee, it will have the power to require people to furnish information to assist investigation.

At local authority level, the Bill seeks to strengthen good practice and help improve the delivery of local authority services to disabled people. It would remove the Mobility and Attendance Allowances from a means test when assessing ability to pay for goods or services. And it carries amendments which would increase (or introduce) the representation of disabled people on consumer and advisory committees.

The Second Reading of the Bill is on Friday, 18 November. If you have not yet written or visited your MP, do so NOW.

Further information from Amanda Jordan, Lobbyist, The Spastics Society, tel. 01-636 5020.

## Have a discount Christmas

Treat someone to membership of the SUPPORT discount card scheme, launched by The Society last summer.

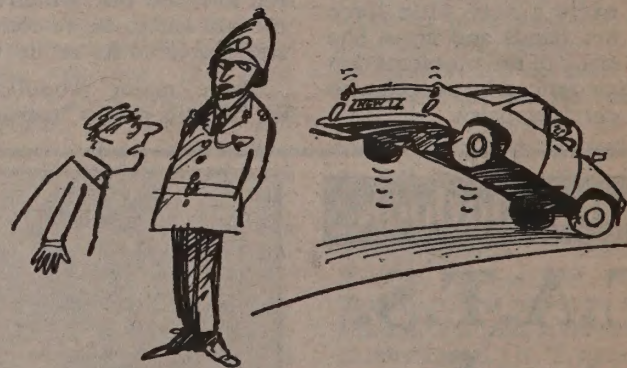
For an annual fee of £12, £9 of which is a direct donation to The Society, members receive a discount card and a directory which lists the outlets offering discounts of up to 20 per cent.

When shopping at one of the 38 high street chains listed, members do not use their card directly at the point of sale, but purchase bonus vouchers in

advance from SUPPORT. For most members, this discount from popular chains is the main advantage of the scheme.

Not only have new outlets joined since August, but other charities have followed The Society's lead. Among charities now involved are the British Heart Foundation, The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus and Voluntary Service Overseas.

Application forms are available from Terri Milton at Park Crescent, tel: 01-636 5020.



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